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ABSTRACT

Current reform initiatives often call for facilitators to work with teachers and administrators in the change process. Although this facilitating position is becoming more common, little is currently understood about specific purposes of this role and the forms it might take. This study examines the work of four facilitators involved in five different successful reform programs focusing on early reading intervention (Success for All, Reading Recovery, Literacy Program, Eclectic School Program, and the State Standards Project). These facilitators are instrumental in different approaches to reform ranging from externally adopted to internally developed interventions. Findings examine the different roles of facilitation as viewed by the facilitators themselves (based on data from interviews) in relation to these different approaches to reform. Common issues and dilemmas are examined. Contains 23 references and 2 figures. (Author/RS)

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Staff Development in Early Reading Intervention Programs

The Facilitator

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CIERA Inquiry 2: Home and School
What is the nature of staff development in schools that have successfully integrated early intervention models into their schoolwide reading programs? What roles do facilitators play in such successful literacy programs?

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Staff Development in Early Reading Intervention Programs: The Facilitator

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Great emphasis is currently being placed on improvement of early reading achievement through reform of schools, educational programs, and teaching. All of these reform programs involve teachers in professional development programs. Although considerable research has been conducted to identify effective elements of reform programs and staff development processes, particularly at the school level (e.g., Fullan, 1991; Griffin, 1986; Little, 1992; McLaughlin, 1991, 1994), there remain significant gaps in our understanding. One of those gaps relates to the work of the facilitators of the reform processes.

In most of the school-level reform programs (e.g., Accelerated Schools, Paideia, Success for All[1]), facilitators are considered a critical element of the process. Facilitation is a reasonably new process and requires that an individual work with a group of teachers over a long period of time to help them change their practices. In programs such as Success for All, facilitators are asked to ensure that teachers are changing their practices. The role goes beyond the restricted sense of 'Staff Developer,' in which someone presents a workshop and then leaves. The facilitator often works full- or part-time within a school and engages in such activities as consulting closely with teachers, observing in classes, modeling practices by working with students, videotaping the classrooms, and engaging in extensive dialogue with the teachers.

The purpose of our study was to conduct in-depth interviews with a group of facilitators who were involved in a number of quite different early reading reform programs to determine their conception of their role and their stance toward teacher change. Since these facilitators were associated with programs that varied in the degree to which the participants were involved in determining the direction of change, we felt that they might have different notions about the nature of change. We also interviewed an administrator about the facilitator role. This individual was actively involved in facilitation at the beginning of the process and until the new facilitator was hired.

Reform Programs

To understand the literature on reform programs, it is important to examine literature focusing on organizational change as well as staff development literature focusing on individual teacher change (see Richardson & Placier, in press, for a thorough review of both literatures). Looking at these literatures together provides some insights into the characteristics of effective reform programs. They include several key features.

Schoolwide Reform

The literature on reform programs suggests that the unit of change should be the school. For example, Success for All programs operate at the school level (Slavin et al., 1994), and Reading Recovery asks that all teachers within a given school become familiar with the theory and practice of Reading Recovery whether or not they are involved in the program (Clay, 1991). The rationales for school-level activity include the need to develop a school culture of improvement (Anders & Richardson, 1991), the need to focus on issues within the specific context (Griffin, 1991), and the need for some standardization of curriculum for long-term student benefits (King & Newmann, 1999; Richardson, 1998).

Long-Term With Follow-Up

There is general consensus that deep reform in teaching practice requires a considerable period of time and that the participants require different but continuing forms of support throughout the process. This contrasts with the typical two-hour workshop in which teachers are presented with a new idea or method and then are left to implement it on their own.

Collegiality/Learning Community

Collegiality involves a group of teachers working together on developing goals, improvement efforts, and assessments. Such collegiality requirements contrast with empirically derived visions of teaching that suggest that teachers walk into a school, shut the classroom door, and teach as they feel they should (Lortie, 1975). Current reform programs suggest the importance of developing learning communities (Palincsar, Magnusson, Marano, Ford, & Brown, in press) and the benefits of dialogue within groups (Gitlin, 1990).

Agreement on Goals and Vision

It is important that the participants in a reform project agree on the goals for the educational program and its vision. This requirement has been present in the literature for some time (e.g., Purkey & Smith, 1983). However, it has been reemphasized recently for the large reform programs operating within the schools.

Buy-In From Participants

Participants in a reform program must agree on the need for change and the particular approach that is being adopted or adapted. For example, Success for All (Slavin et al., 1996) requires that most teachers in a given school be in favor of the change prior to their becoming involved in the program.

Student Assessment

Current programs of reform specify the need to keep track of student learning through assessment. The very nature of Reading Recovery, for example, requires the teacher to constantly diagnose students, and Success for All requires assessment every several months for purposes of re-placing students in groups and determining instructional needs.

Acknowledgment of the Participants' Existing Beliefs and Practices

Recent research suggests strong relationships between teachers' beliefs and practices and the importance of beliefs in processes of fundamental change (Richardson, 1996). This has led to more constructivist and inquiry approaches to staff development. Most current reform programs acknowledge the importance of prior beliefs of the participants.

In addition, there is a characteristic found in all of these programs that is usually not discussed in depth in the literature.

The Facilitator

The facilitator of the change process is a new role required in many reform programs. This person is a staff developer or facilitator and works closely with the teachers in the change process. He or she may have been a teacher at one time; however, the new role requires that attention be paid to facilitating the change process through working with the teachers over a considerable period of time. We call this role *facilitator*, but some of the reform programs use the term *staff developer*. We are using the two terms interchangeably here.

In this paper, we examine the facilitator's role through in-depth interviews of four facilitators who have been engaged in what the community has described as successful reform programs that focus on early reading achievement. To provide a context for these programs, we also observed extensively in several schools in which reform was being implemented, observed several staff development sessions, and examined reports of programs and research for programs that had these available. Although the latter material allows us to describe the programs, the findings we will present here are drawn from the interviews.

The Study

The primary question guiding this study is, What roles do facilitators play in successful literacy programs? It is our goal to uncover the range of roles and to provide a framework though which to examine them. In this study, we examine facilitators' roles from their own perspectives. The term *role* is meant to include the position's tasks and responsibilities, the person's position within the school organization, and the expected outcomes of the facilitator's work. Another question guiding this work is, What does successful staff development look like from the perspective of program facilitators? We undertake a cross-analysis of the data in order to develop a better understanding of the commonalities and differences between facilitation approaches and the dilemmas shared by facilitators.

The Programs

We examine the facilitator role in five programs. These programs were selected because they met several criteria, including having the potential to provide variation along a continuum from externally to internally developed programs. These programs are also categorized as successful by several teachers, principals, and educational researchers from two higher education institutions. Relative geographical proximity to the university research center was also a consideration. Descriptions of the five programs follow.

1. Success for All

Success for All (SFA) is an elementary school program designed by Robert Slavin and his colleagues at Johns Hopkins University (Slavin et al., 1994). The development of SFA began in 1984, and ongoing research supports its current implementation in schools. The aim of SFA is to ensure success in reading and language arts skills for all students, with a particular focus on schools serving large numbers of students from low socioeconomic circumstances. These skills are viewed as the 'gate keepers' for success in school. The program involves all staff in a school and provides a standardized program comprising several components for implementation across grade levels. Teachers at every grade level follow prescribed pedagogical procedures, thus creating a degree of consistency and uniformity for learners throughout the program and across time.

The school in our study that implemented Success for All was a low socio-economic status (low-SES) urban elementary school. All teachers across all grade levels were involved in implementing the program.

2. Reading Recovery

Reading Recovery is an early intervention program based on the research of Marie Clay (1985). It is a "second wave" teaching effort targeted at children who have already been in school for one year and who are identified as having difficulty in reading and writing. The program is designed for the lowest achieving 20% of children to prevent the development of a pattern of reading failure (Clay, 1985). Reading Recovery is an intensive program involving daily 30–40 minute, one-to-one teaching sessions with a trained Reading Recovery teacher over a period of approximately 12 to 20 weeks. The daily sessions follow a structured procedure designed to accelerate children's rate of progress to enable them to catch up with their class peers.

We studied the training and ongoing inservice education of Reading Recovery teachers in an urban school district. The teacher participants worked as full-time Reading Recovery teachers in their individual schools and came together on a regular basis for training and development with the facilitator.

3. Literacy Program

The Literacy Program was developed by a professional developer working at the school district level (i.e., working with K–6 teachers from various schools within one school district). The program aims to support the development of a quality, balanced literacy program at the classroom level and to support district-wide change in literacy teaching practices. The goal is to provide ongoing support to sustain changes in literacy practice. Topics of study include observing student performance, classroom management, instructional materials, and building a K–3 team. Currently the program functions at two levels. At one level, a group of teachers from several elementary schools participate in a one year professional development program. At another level, several teachers who have previously participated in this one-year professional development program are selected to work as 'Literacy Leaders,' taking the roles of mentors and change agents in their schools to provide ongoing support to sustain change.

4. Eclectic School Program

The Eclectic School is an urban school in which a facilitator has been designated to coordinate the introduction, implementation, and maintenance of specialized programs. This program is unique to one school and was developed within this actual school. Programs at this school are selected to address the literacy learning needs of all children, paying particular attention to those with the least developed skills. This school is a low-SES city school, and we define it as *eclectic* because a variety of programs are adapted over time. The program may also be described as *homegrown*—a term developed by Stringfield and his colleagues in a study of school reform programs (Stringfield, Milsap, & Herman, 1997). This term describes schools that take on change processes themselves by selecting a program and adapting it to their needs.

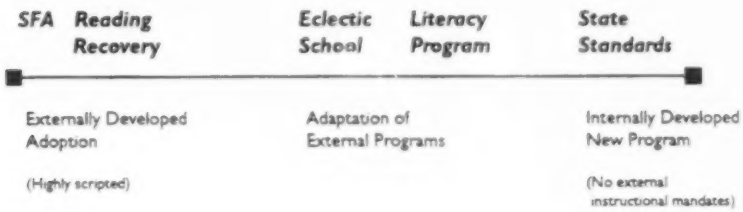
5. State Standards Project

This project involved a three-year collaboration between a state department of education and a large research university situated in the same state. The project was funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Educational Research and Improvement and included demonstration districts to pilot and draft standards and benchmarks in the area of English language arts

for the state. The professional development component of the State Standards Project involved teachers and administrators from four districts in summer sessions and monthly meetings over a two-year period to develop ways of bringing the standards and benchmarks into classroom instruction. Although the professional development component officially ended in the summer of 1996, related efforts are still ongoing in each of the districts.

These five programs may be positioned along a continuum from external to internal development. In other words, they differ in the degree to which the nature of what teachers are being asked to do is determined by outside policymakers and program developers (external) or the participants themselves (internal). Figure 1 places these programs along the external-internal continuum of development. At the far left of the continuum, the change program is prepackaged and highly scripted, and the external developers determine the behaviors of the teachers. At the other end, a particular group of teachers and administrators develop their own change program, often through a collaborative inquiry process. Somewhere in the middle of the continuum, programs are adapted by a school or district. Often, for example, a staff might choose an externally developed program and adapt it to meet the needs of their particular context.

Figure 1: The instructional change continuum and the programs that were studied.



The Participants

Once programs were identified, key facilitators within the programs—those with a high level of involvement in the teacher development/implementation aspect of the programs—were selected to be study participants. These people were identified through discussions with school teaching and administrative staff and through the examination of program artifacts.

Table 1 provides an overview of the programs and the facilitators and administrators associated with each.

Interviews

Interviews were undertaken with four[2] facilitators in five early literacy intervention projects and one administrator who was familiar with the role. However, we focus our analysis on the four facilitators, with comments, from

time to time, from the administrator. The five programs represent considerable variation in both the nature of the program and the staff development involved. The belief interviews (Richardson, Anders, Tidwell, & Lloyd, 1991) focused on individual background, perception of the facilitator role, description of the program, vision for successful professional development, beliefs about teacher change, and views regarding autonomy. Follow-up interviews were also conducted.

Table 1: Facilitators and Programs

Program	Facilitator
Success for All	Moira White European American, background in elementary school teaching and special education
Reading Recovery	Toni New Zealander, background in elementary teaching in New Zealand, Reading Recovery teacher and then Reading Recovery tutor teacher in New Zealand and United States
Literacy Program	Toni (see above)
Eclectic School	Sharon African American, background in business, initially became involved in an educational capacity as a parent volunteer
State Standards Project	Michelle White European American, background in secondary school teaching of English and literature Lisa White European American. Holds a faculty position in a university based school of education

Analysis

The interviews were transcribed and placed within a qualitative software program (NUD*IST). Codes were developed by taking several consecutive passes through the data, initially looking for themes evident across the data and later developing categories for these themes and naming them. These categories were fluid throughout initial data analysis; as they became more clearly representative of the data, we established their use for further data analysis while searching for contradictions to them. The interviews were coded using the following categories: perceptions of own roles as professional developer/administrator, beliefs about teacher/school change, time frame of work, attitudes towards building teacher community, autonomy and trust, top-down/bottom-up approach to professional development work, view of the relationship between teacher beliefs and practice, vision of successful professional development, view of systemic reform, theory of teachers as learners, and image of professional development as a political act.

The first analysis looked at the individual facilitators in terms of their perceptions of their roles as these appeared to differ across reform programs. All other analyses examined responses within coding categories across the interviews. The categories of analysis drawn from the interviews were: perceptions of facilitator role, view of successful staff development, dilemmas, and differences in views.

Findings

Facilitators' Perceptions of Their Roles

The following descriptive categories are constructed from four facilitator/staff developers' descriptions of their own roles and from the researchers' analysis of the nature of their work.

Table 2: Facilitators' Perceptions of Role

Facilitator	Roles
Moira	Program organizer and communicator Advocate for students with literacy learning needs Assessor of student learning Resource provider Bridger of teacher and program needs Quality controller Networker
Toni	Coach Link with literature Visionary Provider of model for practice and reflection Facilitator of reflective dialogue Facilitator of ongoing professional community
Sharon	Provider of diagnosis and action plans Resource selector and adaptor Trainer Developer of business partnerships Advocate for students with learning needs
Michelle	Co-learner Advisor Visionary Provider of models of implementation Cultivator of teacher voice Advocate for teacher political action Facilitator of collaborative community

A description of what these roles meant for each of the facilitators follows.

Moira

Moira's role as a school coordinator of Success for All is multifaceted yet closely tied to the nature and content of the Success for All program.

Program organizer and communicator. Moira feeds data about the ongoing program in her school back to the program developers and disseminates new and updated information from the program developers to those implementing the program in her school.

Advocate for students with literacy learning needs. She serves on several committees within the wider school community beyond the specialized SFA program she is employed to implement.

Assessor of student learning. The SFA program involves Moira in the continual assessment and placement of students in reading groups. She is also responsible for convening grade-level meetings for teachers regarding student achievement levels.

Resource provider. Moira is responsible for the provision and organization of materials needed for program implementation. This includes responding to teacher requests, considering budget allocation, and coming up with strategies to maximize the productive use of funding.

> This morning before you came a teacher came in and said, "This sequencing is not working for me. I've got to have a different lesson." And I went and I happened to know where there was one that would fit her needs and I pulled it and ran and got it up to her room before she started. All of those things happen frequently.

Bridger of teacher and program needs. Moira bridges the needs of teachers with the requirements and demands of the SFA program by providing resources, continually testing students, and monitoring classrooms to feed data back to Johns Hopkins University.

Quality controller. Moira constantly monitors program and 'training' staff. She continually checks for standardization in practice so that teachers remain close to the preferred methods of teaching, and produces reports about student reading levels.

Networker. She maintains contact with the larger SFA organization and with other educators in similar SFA positions to her own. Furthermore, she maintains contact with the community (e.g., facilitating family-support meetings for students with caregivers of students who are having difficulties). She also develops plans of action for students, such as planning for the provision of food and transportation.

Toni

Toni assumes a professional development role in both Reading Recovery and the Literacy Program. These two programs are based on a similar philosophy of literacy learning and teaching, but each has a different unit of focus. The unit for Reading Recovery is the individual child, whereas the unit for the literacy program is the whole classroom literacy program. Toni suggests that the same theory is played out at different levels in these programs but that her role is cohesive across programs. She cultivates a broad generic understanding of classroom practices for the Literacy Program and a more fine-tuned focus on the individual child in her Reading Recovery role. She finds these roles cohesive in that Reading Recovery fits within the framework of the larger ongoing classroom literacy program.

Coach. Toni supports teachers in their practice, visits classrooms and individual lessons, and provides feedback on the teaching practice of teacher participants.

Link with literature. She provides a literature base for suggested practice and a rationale for action. She uses literature as a resource and draws the attention of teachers to specific theories about literacy teaching and learning within this to use as a rationale for promoting specific practices.

Visionary. She provides leadership in terms of resources, advice, expertise, ideas, enthusiasm, and vision.

Provider of a model for practice and reflection. Toni promotes a model for actual classroom practice and specific early literacy teaching strategies (e.g. 'teaching behind the glass'):

> The first year I was here we didn't have anyone and we used videos and things like that, but I didn't really initially realize how much modeling these teachers needed because they had just never seen teaching done in this way before. So we do a lot more modeling in Reading Recovery using trained teachers to teach lessons behind the glass for all of September and half of October, so they probably see eight or ten lessons before they actually have to come and do one of those behind the glass themselves.

Toni also talks of being a role model herself due to her years of teaching experience and her current work, which involves teaching children on a daily basis.

Facilitator of reflective dialogue. She provides a place for teachers to teach in front of each other and facilitates this as a site for reflection. As Toni puts it:

> There is constant dialoguing because language is considered to be the mediating tool and there is constant reflection and opening to questions and thinking about practice in action.

Facilitator of ongoing professional community. Toni talks of a commitment to continue "growing leaders" and of her role in developing people to take her place in the future. She views herself as the developer of a professional community in which people can grow, and the developer of literacy leaders within this community who can then take on facilitation roles themselves.

Sharon

Sharon is the special programs facilitator in what we have called the Eclectic School. Sharon's role in this program is to identify, partially modify, and implement a range of different projects in the schoolwide early literacy curriculum

Provider of diagnosis and action plans. Part of Sharon's role is to be knowledgeable about the needs of the students, staff, community, and school. She identifies issues that require action and locates and accesses resources and plans for action.

Resource selector and adaptor. Sharon seeks out suitable programs and materials and considers these in relation to the specific needs of her students and the wider school community and staff. She adapts pre-existing programs as she deems necessary for successful implementation within her school. Sharon interprets and adapts available external programs to enrich existing work. Her role, as she sees it, is to make programs relevant to teachers and responsive to their needs.

Trainer. Sharon provides teachers with specific information about programs and implementation.

> Here we work a lot on our half days; we have certain half days of school when the kids are not here in the afternoon and so every half day we have some kind of an inservice for teachers and depending on what is going on... I may run an hour inservice on a particular area, whether it is 'analyze and apply' or 'integration through the curriculum' of certain things or life skills or things like that.

Developer of business partnerships. Sharon has a background in business and moved into education following this. She is proactive in developing partnerships with local community businesses (e.g., banks, toy shops). She not only brings these businesses into the school building, but also takes the school community to business sites.

Advocate for students with learning needs within their social context. Since Sharon is employed under Title I provision, she looks beyond the students to the wider community context, including the home environment. She talks about helping parents and caregivers understand banking and financial matters and trying to meet their own literacy needs, as many are struggling themselves.

Michelle

Michelle is a staff developer with the State Standards Project. She describes her roles as follows.

Co-learner. Michelle speaks of learning with teachers and other project staff as the program evolves.

> The thing about working with teachers who are trying to change their practice is to take a stance that these are learners, and that as facilitator or teacher I am co-learner with them.... What that kind of means to me is that, a lot of people talk about being a consultant, but I see myself as teacher and as co-learner.

Advisor. Michelle also describes her role as an advisory position in some ways. She describes her work as helping schools to develop standards and sees herself in an advisory role on the management team.

Visionary. Michelle provides leadership in the form of resources, advice, expertise, ideas, enthusiasm, and vision.

Provider of models of implementation. Michelle talks specifically about the provision of models for innovation in teaching.

> It's important to couple any kind of document with stories, and I was really making an argument for illustrations—that what people need is to see what it looks like, and to see the kind of practice that is involved in moving towards these standards.

Cultivator of teacher voice. Michelle views the State Standards Project as an opportunity to empower teachers and cultivate teacher voice. She says, "I saw it as beginning to help teachers and districts articulate their stories about professional learning."

Advocate for teacher political action. Michelle develops awareness of the political nature of decisions about practice made at the personal, classroom, and public levels.

Facilitator of collaborative community. She puts energy into developing a safe, trusting community for the sharing of resources, ideas, and support.

Some of the facilitators, such as Michelle in the State Standards Project, articulated their role to be evolving and changing with the projects in which they were involved. Others, such as Moira (SFA), have more established ideas about their roles which do not appear to change with the program—that is, the tasks they do might change, but their role remains consistent.

Our analysis of these data reveal several commonalities and differences in perceptions of roles. The aspects these four facilitators' roles appear to have in common are responsibilities for organization/action planning, resource provision, advocating for student needs, and teacher coaching/facilitation of dialogue.

On the other hand, it is interesting to note the degree of differentiation among the roles each facilitator identifies for herself and the different programs with which she is involved. Perhaps the two facilitators whose roles contrast most are Michelle and Moira. Indeed, the program Michelle facilitates is at the internal development end of the continuum, whereas Moira is the facilitator associated with the program located to the external development end of the continuum (see Figure 1). Michelle's definition of her role as co-learner, advocate of teacher voice, and visionary contrasts starkly with Moira's description of her role as quality controller, bridger of teacher and program needs, and communicator.

Facilitators' Views of Successful Staff Development

The interviews revealed a common belief in a number of features characterizing a successful staff development process. These are some of the common themes extracted from the interviews.

Supportive participant attitude

All facilitators identified a supportive participant attitude towards the program to be crucial for success. Analysis of the actual programs and interviews indicates that a variety of means are used to address this. The voluntary nature of the participation structure (Reading Recovery/Literacy Program, State Standards Project), the requirement for a specified percentage of publicly articulated staff support towards the program for the program to be adopted or implemented by the school (SFA), and the active recruitment of sympathetic and supportive participants (State Standards Project) were all thought to be critical in establishing a milieu that would foster a supportive participant attitude. Sharing of the rationale for a program prior to program adoption and implementation was also viewed as productive in promoting a supportive participant environment (Eclectic School).

Need for change in teacher beliefs

The issue of teacher beliefs was addressed in-depth by all but one of the facilitators (Moira, SFA). They spoke of the need to change teacher beliefs and conceptions and discussed possible means of achieving this, such as making relevant literature available (Reading Recovery/Literacy Program, State Standards Project); providing training and education about different approaches to practice than currently undertaken and their rationales (Eclectic School); practicing reflective dialogue (Literacy Program); and empowering teachers to uncover and examine their own beliefs (State Standards Project).

Importance of time frame

Three main aspects of time management were articulated by each of the facilitators: (a) setting aside enough time to implement the intervention, (b) the need for key facilitators to have sufficient time to dedicate to supporting program implementation, and (c) the importance of not overloading teachers' time schedules. First, all project descriptions discussed the need for adequate time for teacher development, specifically the need for long-term development and implementation of programs. The definition of 'long-term' varied among projects; some schools looked at a one-year time frame and others suggested a longer time frame.

Second, these staff developers felt that a key facilitator needed to have adequate available time to dedicate towards program implementation. Personnel from all projects studied stressed the importance of having a staff member whose primary role is the work associated with implementing the early reading intervention program. Sharon (Eclectic School) said:

> Everybody is involved and everybody wants to do something so I will be honest: It is a lot to do and it takes a full-time person to try to organize the program and so I don't see how.... I think it would be really hard to do in a building where you did not have someone who could dedicate enough time to it.

Finally, all interviewees referred to the importance of considering the existing work load of teacher participants and being conscious of this in planning the staff development process.

Building community of teachers/trust/ collaboration/sharing

All four facilitators discussed the importance of establishing a community of teachers within a collaborative and supportive environment. They explained that this was not typical in either the historical or current culture of U.S. schools. Specifically, they addressed the importance of situating teacher development within a supportive community in order to foster risk-taking and shared responsibility and enable continued growth beyond the specific teacher development program.

Role of wider community infrastructure

The facilitators addressed the critical role of a sympathetic and supportive macro structure beyond the unit of the individual teacher in his or her individual work environment, and even beyond the school itself. Toni (Literacy Program) said:

> In one of the districts they didn't have the same kind of infrastructure in place that the other three districts did for pushing forward, and so with help they decided that they really needed to spend the whole first year establishing a stronger internal community that

> would then allow them to do some of these other things and that's indeed what they did.

Michelle also mentioned this in reference to the State Standards Project.

> It was sort of like as much about teacher empowerment as it was about the standards and benchmarks. I think in a way we were trying to point out that more of a sense of cohesiveness and community within the district could change how education happens, you know that it is not just you all by yourself doing your good work in the classroom... but that you also have a responsibility to work with your colleagues and help them.

Facilitators have common beliefs about several features of successful staff development. They also communicated the dilemmas they faced in their work; some of these were again common to several facilitators.

Dilemmas

All interviewees talked of dilemmas they faced in their professional development work with teachers. The following themes emerged from the data regarding the dilemmas these facilitators commonly faced.

Building trust and confidence while pushing things along

The notion of keeping things moving at the desired pace while also allowing time for teachers to develop trust and confidence in themselves and the program was a dilemma many discussed. Toni talked about the level of intensity of both the Reading Recovery and Literacy Programs, and said, "I think in order to get change you do have to have a degree of intensity." She is referring to the time frame of involvement and also to the expectations for participant involvement, their commitment to the project, and their degree of engagement, with intensity representing significant demands on intellectual engagement. The need for a high level of intensity and to continually push things along towards change was a common theme in all interviews, but it was often a source of tension and uncertainty. Lisa, an administrator working with the State Standards Project (see Table 1), discussed the tension between building trust and confidence for participants and moving things along.

> There were times when I thought this was just like one big mutual admiration society and that it wasn't critical enough, not in a negative sense but in a reflective sense where people were getting there... but the flip side of that is that as these people build confidence and trusting relationships with each other and a sense of community... they seem to be more willing to examine their own practice in a critical way... and that clearly takes a very long time to get there....This sort of celebratory attitude of 'aren't we wonderful' and 'isn't everything we do wonderful' was confidence building and trust building, and it was clear you had to have that in order to do the hard work. That's what I don't know about, how do you get this balance between the two and still push people along as hard and as fast as you can because time is precious in these things.

Toni (Reading Recovery/Literacy Program) discussed the subtle but critical differences between congenial and collegial relationships in a teaching community. She referred to the tendency for individuals to strive for congeniality and stressed the importance she saw in developing a community of collegiality wherein people were professional, critical, and honest in their communication with each other. She spoke of the importance of providing an environment in which collegial relationships can develop.

> It is the difference between congeniality and collegiality and I think you know... congeniality means in the staff room you never raise any issues that are sort of thorny whereas collegiality means that you actually can raise something that you don't necessarily agree on... but that you can work out ways to find some common ground... but that is very different [from] how teachers have traditionally worked.

Providing a balance of individual autonomy and external direction

The trade-off between promoting individual autonomy and standardizing behavior is a constant dilemma in the planning and implementation of these facilitators' professional development work. They mentioned the need to have teachers develop their own means of working, but also articulated the desire to have some overall cohesiveness to the program.

This tension also arose in the adaptation of the program to suit the different needs of students, teachers, and the school. For example, Sharon (Eclectic School) referred to each classroom teacher practicing the same life skills at the same time with students, thus enabling some consistency across teaching practice and classroom action within the school. At other times, she spoke of the need to tailor the program to meet the individual classroom teachers' needs.

> I think you almost need someone who has got an obsessive-compulsive disorder to do this job, because it is a lot and it takes a lot to try and do things so that it fits each teachers needs... Teachers are so different, and what you can do for one teacher which is just great will just tick the next teacher off no end. You know it is really hard to try and satisfy people and to work with one idea and make it work for 25 people.

On the other hand, Moira (SFA) spoke of every teacher doing their own thing at the outset prior to implementation of the program:

> Teachers didn't used to make the sounds the same way; now, even though teachers have different accents, they now all make the sounds the same way, and everyone gives homework, and so there is more cohesiveness among the staff now, teachers are now talking to each other and [are] no longer little islands unto themselves.

Michelle (State Standards Project) mentioned this constant balancing act between the idiosyncratic needs of the teacher and her own need to provide a bigger picture with some degree of consistency across teachers. She talked about the need for individual autonomy and choice.

> It is really important that you work with people individually on their own projects; they need to have choices. It seems to me to be very different from the way I see a lot of professional development

> talked about. You know we talk about these kinds of programs of professional development without thinking enough about individual teachers.... I need to know what their stories are; I also need to know what their dreams are.

The agenda-setting dilemma[3]

Interviewees talked about the tension between allowing teachers to determine their own direction and using their role as facilitators to set the agenda. This dilemma was particularly apparent in the more constructivist approaches, as indicated by Toni (Reading Recovery/Literacy Program):

> While I believe strongly that we work on a constructivist paradigm where teachers are working together to build their knowledge and things... there is no secret that they are coming to learn about these teaching approaches; we consider that a quality balanced literacy program has certain features so it is not "guess what is inside my head," it is "today we are going to learn about reading, and tomorrow we are going to learn about shared reading, and then we are going to learn about guided reading, and then we are going to learn about" you know....

The ever present juggling of the top-down or bottom-up orchestration of work is a further dilemma in agenda setting. Lisa (State Standards Project Coordinator) stated:

> I was still thinking more top-down in terms of we would get these products from these districts that would then be supplementary documents to the curriculum framework so we'd have all these sample instructional units. Each district would have their own local curriculum and etc. etc., but of course it didn't work that way at all. You know we thought "why does everything have to be so negative about anything traditional and always ripping down existing structures" and so forth... and I still wonder sometimes about this balance between structure and pushing people to accomplish certain goals, versus clearly the need and the desirability of having a lot of things flow from the bottom up and just see what comes of it... and I don't know that I yet know what the best balance might be there.

Differences

In this empirical work, we also aimed to identify the nature of differences between the various staff developers' beliefs about and approaches to teacher change. Our analysis of the interviews, observations, and artifacts suggests that these can be broken down into the following themes.

Use of research literature

The presence of a literature base for both the particular literacy intervention in question and the professional development process as a whole was evident to varying degrees across all projects. There was considerable difference, however, in the nature and use of this literature. The theoretical base for the work is strong in Reading Recovery, and research findings are an important component of the literature base for SFA. These two programs tended to have what might be referred to as core texts on which work was

based. In contrast, the State Standards Project, Eclectic School, and Literacy Program tended to draw on a wide range of literature.

Degree of standardization of teacher behavior

The degree to which all teachers in a given program are expected to employ the same behaviors varies considerably, from SFA and Reading Recovery at one end of the spectrum to the State Standards Project at the other. Moira spoke of her work as an SFA facilitator, saying that

> You have to follow the structure of the program... and one of the jobs of the facilitator is to see that is being done. They never know when I'm going to pop in. I don't want to be a threat. I mean, I'm not an administrator, I'm just a teacher. But on the other hand, they know they're supposed to be following the program.

In contrast to this, Michelle (State Standards Project) said:

> The whole issue of change and autonomy is interesting. A really important issue to me is democracy; you know you want a teacher to be a problem solver and to be critically literate herself.... I've a problem teaching somebody a script for a procedure and to just give it to them that they have to follow in a doctrine way; it leaves that person sort of unsatisfied and without autonomy. On the other hand, sometimes you have to go through the motions. It is like scaffolding, sometimes you have to go through the motions or follow a routine in order to get to the critical point.

Stance toward need for systemic reform

Some interviewees focused on the need for systemic reform, whereas others didn't really refer to the context beyond their immediate working situation. Lisa, who coordinated the State Standards Project, said:

> I don't think we're going to have large scale success with systemic reform until we see districts able to understand some of these process things. I'm not articulating this very well, but I see pockets of innovat[illegible] with individual teachers and buildings or individual buildings and districts—I don't see any kind of K-12 continuity or coherence... and that's what I see as success for the larger project is when you have that kind of district level conversation and consensus building.

On the other hand, Sharon's perspective on her work at the Eclectic School was focused at the teacher/classroom/school level as it is embedded in the greater social community, rather than in the larger educational or political arena.

Degree of identification of teacher development work as a political act

Some viewed this professional development work as a political act. For example, Toni (Literacy Program) mentioned that the classroom practice of participant teachers differed from the practice of others in their school and wider school district and talked about the political ramifications of this. Michelle (State Standards Project) also spoke of empowering teachers to be political agents.

> You would reach outside of your classroom and then you reach outside of your own district because you want this for every child in the state and around the country. So anyway I think that that's the way it kind of unfolded, but it was as much about teachers as it was

> about the standards. And then serendipitously the political stress that the project faced ended up kind of cementing this fact in teachers' minds; they ended up realizing that it is not enough to close the door, that you actually have to be able to explain why and how you are doing things and to be able to make arguments for it. And this was one of the things that was kind of interesting, the demonstration site teachers were most ready and most informed to be able to go and speak at the state board, write letters to the editor, you know do the kinds of arguments, you know they had parents and kids arguing with them and one of the things that happened was as they began to speak in those venues they began to realize, hey... we are pretty powerful here. You know it is not just a one time thing.

Definition of a successful change program

Success for all of these professional developers was ultimately predicated on students' progress in reading achievement. However, there was much diversity in how the facilitators defined success in their professional development work. For example, Moira's definition of success is to have "all teachers implementing [the] program as outlined by SFA authorities." On the other hand, Lisa (State Standards Project Coordinator) said:

> If you can get a teacher to that point where they can understand that there's a lot to know about each and every thing that they are trying to teach their kids about, and they have to keep working at it and evaluating the outcomes, I think that you've been successful.... If I could waltz into these districts and ask them to tell me what their K–12 system of language arts curriculum and assessment is and they could tell me, I would say "wow, we've really done something here."

Toni (Reading Recovery/Literacy Program) suggested:

> Well, one measure of success will be that I train local people to come in behind me and teach it, so that I won't be here forever, as I have got other things I want to do, and um... I want to know that there is a really solid foundation and that there is a whole group of people who will sustain each other; we have the first one of those coming in to teach a class next semester, so the process has started.... The challenge for us is to be able to grow people to be able to continue to teach it.

Finally, Michelle (State Standards Project) said:

> It first begins by an enhanced sense of community, in the sense that "oh I can talk to my colleagues," and then a sense of "I can take some chances and experiment with my practice," but inevitably when you first do that it does not always lead to improved student performance. Ultimately for me the evidence is in improved student performance and that is, to me it is all those different measures, it is not one, are the kids more able to talk about their learning, do their work samples show growth, would parents agree that the work samples show growth, what do the parents think about what is going on, and then standardized measures—that is probably the least interesting part to me about the whole thing.

Discussion and Implications

The facilitators in these five programs gave us very different descriptions of their roles. One difference concerns the arena in which they see themselves operating. Moira describes her role as an SFA facilitator at the school level. She talks of providing resources, organizing, accessing students, and monitoring. On the other hand, Michelle describes her role with the State Standards Project as functioning within the wider political arena in cultivating teacher voice and acting as an advocate for political action. Toni also talks about the political aspects of her work in promoting district-wide programmatic and pedagogical change with teachers in her work with the Literacy Program.

Another difference concerns conceptions of the teacher's role in the process of change. Moira sees herself as a trainer who is responsible for quality control and standardizing teacher behavior. This suggests that the teacher is a person who should conform to a program developed outside of the school. Michelle, on the other hand, views the teachers and herself as co-learners and experts who have a role and voice in their own change processes.

These different approaches to the facilitator role suggest very different stances on the part of the facilitators manifested by different beliefs about the nature of teacher change, the role of beliefs in teacher change, and the role of context in adapting or adopting external programs. The question of the relationship between stance and the reform process cannot be addressed fully within this study. However, it is possible to speculate, using two cases.

1. Stance May Affect Program

When the State Standards Project was first conceived, it was meant to be a straightforward, direct instruction approach to communicating the literacy standards to teachers and providing them with ways of meeting them. There were still questions, however, about the ways of teaching literacy that would best help students meet the standards. Michelle's involvement in staff development strongly impacted the nature of the process. Lisa, the Coordinator of the State Standards Project, indicated that she had some initial concern about Michelle's inquiry approach to the staff development; however, she eventually became enthusiastic about the results and adjusted some of her beliefs about the nature of teacher change. Michelle's background in writing process programs and her strong beliefs in autonomy and the need for teachers to engage in the inquiry process strongly affected the nature of this program. This is evident in this statement she made about teacher involvement:

> I wanted them involved in the creation of the standards themselves so that whenever we would talk about the standards we could couple it with, with videotape images specifically of their practice so that you would say "Voice, here is a classroom where voice is happening," you know, and here is a real teacher in the state who is

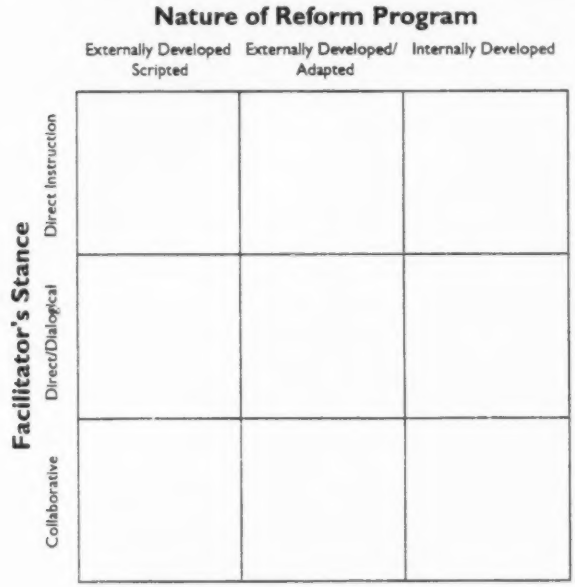
engaged in this practice... because I just thought that it would change the misconception of the standards.

2. Stance May Not Match Program Assumptions

Toni is involved in two very different teacher change programs. Reading Recovery has a clear focus and set of expectations for the nature of instruction within the program. Although reflection is certainly an important aspect of the tutoring program for the teachers, the reflection is shaped strongly by a particular model of student learning and development. On the other hand, the Literacy Program is more open-ended. In this program, Toni sees herself and the teachers as building their knowledge together. However, she has a clear sense of the knowledge they should be building. Although the Literacy Program was intended to be an internally developed one, Toni has a pretty clear idea of what she would like to see the regular teachers doing in their classrooms. As described above, Toni consequently has dilemmas concerning her authority in specifying the instructional model and the maintenance of a constructivist approach. Nonetheless, she is quite adamant in her statements that she does not approach these two programs differently. She feels that there is strong opportunities for teacher autonomy in both programs.

This study begins to suggest the importance of facilitator stance in reform programs. We have constructed a matrix to indicate how the nature of the reform program and the stance of the facilitator may interact to produce very different programs.

Figure 2: Reform program development and facilitator stance.



In this matrix, the reform program being implemented is located along the top of the matrix. The facilitator's stance is located along the side. In this case, we have suggested three development locations: Externally Developed/Scripted, Externally Developed/Adapted, and Internally Developed. The three facilitator stances are: Direct Instruction, Direct Instruction/Dialogical, and Collaborative. We would place Success for All and Reading Recovery in the Externally Developed/Scripted box, the Eclectic School and Literacy Program in the Externally Developed/Adapted box, and the State Standards Project between the Externally Developed/Adapted and the Internally Developed box. The facilitators also differ in stance. Moira's stance is Direct Instruction, Toni's and Sharon's is Direct/Dialogical, and Michelle's is Collaborative. In these cases, the stance pretty well matches the programs, although, as mentioned above, there may be some confusion between Toni's stance and the nature of the two programs with which she works. Although the direction of the relationship cannot be determined from this study, it does suggest the importance of the facilitators' stance in relation to the nature of reform programs, raising issues that should be considered by those engaged in reform programs as well as questions for future research.

Notes

1. See American Institutes of Research (1999) for a comprehensive description of current reform programs.
2. One of the staff developers, Toni, was the facilitator of two of the programs studied.
3. This term was coined by Richardson (1992), who was involved with colleagues in conducting an "internally developed" staff development process.

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About CIERA

The Center for the Improvement of Early Reading Achievement (CIERA) is the national center for research on early reading and represents a consortium of educators in five universities (University of Michigan, University of Virginia, and Michigan State University with University of Southern California and University of Minnesota), teacher educators, teachers, publishers of texts, tests, and technology, professional organizations, and schools and school districts across the United States. CIERA is supported under the Educational Research and Development Centers Program, PR/Award Number R305R70004, as administered by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education.

Mission. CIERA's mission is to improve the reading achievement of America's children by generating and disseminating theoretical, empirical, and practical solutions to persistent problems in the learning and teaching of beginning reading.

CIERA Research Model

The model that underlies CIERA's efforts acknowledges many influences on children's reading acquisition. The multiple influences on children's early reading acquisition can be represented in three successive layers, each yielding an area of inquiry of the CIERA scope of work. These three areas of inquiry each present a set of persistent problems in the learning and teaching of beginning reading:

CIERA INQUIRY 1
Readers and Texts

Characteristics of readers and texts and their relationship to early reading achievement. What are the characteristics of readers and texts that have the greatest influence on early success in reading? How can children's existing knowledge and classroom environments enhance the factors that make for success?

CIERA INQUIRY 2
Home and School

Home and school effects on early reading achievment. How do the contexts of homes, communities, classrooms, and schools support high levels of reading achievement among primary-level children? How can these contexts be enhanced to ensure high levels of reading achievement for all children?

CIERA INQUIRY 3
Policy and Profession

Policy and professional effects on early reading achievement. How can new teachers be initiated into the profession and experienced teachers be provided with the knowledge and dispositions to teach young children to read well? How do policies at all levels support or detract from providing all children with access to high levels of reading instruction?

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